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**Overview**

The Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC) is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to autism research, education and resources for children and families.

SARRC undertakes self-directed research, serves as a satellite site for national and international projects and provides up-to-date information, training and assistance to families and professionals about autism and related disorders.

Through integrative research, educational outreach, model programs and collaborative initiatives, SARRC sets forth, promotes and facilitates best practices for early intervention and long-term care of children with autism and related disorders.

Our vision is to create an internationally recognized, best practices model that can be duplicated in other parts of Arizona, across the U.S. and around the world. Our community will provide a safe, nurturing and beautiful environment where residents and participants may live with dignity and respect. This model community will promote maximum independence for the individual; offer choices in terms of housing options, employment opportunities, recreational programs and daily living activity; and integrate individuals with autism and typical peers within this community and with the community at-large.

A conceptual site plan and renderings have been developed. A comprehensive operational plan has been created, and a capital plan is being prepared. With so few options for the long-term care of our children, and with 30-year wait lists at nearly all of the highly rated facilities we explored, we cannot delay in launching our plans.

We also are eager to turn our plans for a model school program into reality. SARRC is working with educators and administrators across the Valley to help them learn more about how to best work with children with autism and their families. Our plans include developing an after-school and summer school program and ultimately, a year-round educational experience. In addition to benefiting the children who will participate in the school program, this model school would be used to expose more educators and administrators to the therapeutic interventions and classroom structure that advance the learning process.

**Research**

SARRC, in collaboration with the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen), is designing and implementing research efforts to help children and families impacted by autism. Together SARRC and TGen will actively seek families willing to participate in long-term studies aimed at fully annotating clinical pedigrees and helping to find a cure for autism. The research focuses around:

1. Genetics/Genomics
2. The SARRC Database
3. Metabolic Markers
4. Secretin
5. Psychosocial Issues